

Local Food Stamps Available On July 1

Food stamps will be available for welfare recipients in the county, hopefully by July 1, county supervisors decided today.

At the urging of Ray Ansell, social welfare director, the board unanimously agreed to switch from a donated foods program to the food stamps.

The food stamps make it possible for welfare recipients to purchase staples from local grocery stores, while in the current program farm surplus commodities are issued to the recipients.

The switch is prompted by public opinion survey of 5000 welfare recipients. Ansell said 60 per cent favored food stamps and only 22 per cent preferred donated foods.

A new cost saving administrative device also makes the program more attractive. This will be a direct, voluntary deduction of the cost of the food stamps from welfare checks.

The stamps can be used to purchase foods worth many times the cost to the welfare recipients.

Asked if he thinks this will add more persons to the list of those who now get surplus foods, Ansell replied, "My opin-

ion is that it will, because many elderly people who now can't go out and get the donated foods will authorize this voluntary withholding and get the food stamps right with their checks."

This administrative cost-cutting will make the food stamp program no more costly than the current surplus foods programs, Ansell said.

He estimated the cost will be about \$135,600, compared to \$138,720 for the surplus food program.

Other alternatives for delivery of stamps considered and rejected included having welfare recipients buy the stamps at banks or other agencies. This would have sharply increased administrative costs.

Supervisors approved the idea of a food stamp program in December, 1968, but wanted a joint program allowing both food stamps and donated foods because older citizens prefer the food stamps while large families prefer the donated foods. Ansell said new bonus features within the food stamp program now make it more desirable for the majority of persons.

The program was recommended by the welfare advisory commission.